

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Gwen L. Rudney, President
rudneygl@morris.umn.edu 320-589-6402

Bob Utke, Executive Assistant
bobjutke@gmail.com 612-759-7878

In March 2012, the Tiered Licensure Task Force recommended Minnesota move to a tiered licensure system. The April 2015 Office of the Legislative Auditor's Report on Minnesota Teacher Licensure, also recommended a tier licensure system. Two independent groups who have studied our licensure system have both recommended the implementation of a tiered system. MACTE continues to support the concept of a tiered licensure system and we are hopeful the proposal will move forward and be implemented.

A tiered system has the potential to be an effective solution to streamlining a complicated and confusing system. We have a wonderful opportunity in front of us that we need to take full advantage of and we need to consider all the possibilities beyond just fixing what is currently in place. We need to use this opportunity to make a world-class system for the benefit of our students.

The decision to create a tiered system is only the first decision and most likely one of the easiest decisions in the entire process. The questions that next need to be address are important and desire a comprehensive examination by a balanced group of education stakeholders who have expertise in teacher education, teacher evaluation, professional development, and schools. How many tiers? How many years at each level? What qualifications? What does each tier represent in the professional growth of teachers? These important decisions will need to be made after a through review of the research literature and experiences of other states and countries.

A tiered licensure system would allow for a more comprehensive look at induction to the profession and it could provide incentives for experienced teachers to continue to develop and improve their performance. Although these last two items aren't emphasized in the OLA report they are very important in building this new system and should be purposefully planned for and implemented. MACTE and experienced teacher educators need to be deeply involved in the development and on-going evaluation of a tiered licensure system.

MACTE encourages the Board to consider the following:

- Students in Minnesota deserve highly qualified teachers from diverse backgrounds.
- The licensure system should be consistent and transparent.
- Teachers coming into Minnesota need to be held to same standards as teachers completing their licensure in the state.
- Teachers move within districts and between states.
- There is a contradicting research base connecting tiered licensure with student achievement
- Induction programs need to be considered in the model with sustainable monetary support and clear expectations and alignment with professional practice standards.
- The system should include tiers for all teachers throughout their career from beginning teacher to master teacher.

We hope the creation and implementation of a tiered licensure system will continue to emphasize the professionalism of teaching.